

NATIONAL PULSE MEMORIAL

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 7, 2021

Ms. McCOLLUM. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022 (S. 1605).

The annual defense authorization bill is important legislation that guides Department of Defense policy and provides a framework for our Armed Forces for the year ahead. The House and Senate have worked together to craft this bipartisan piece of legislation that makes some significant policy changes impacting our service members and their families.

S. 1605 makes historic and sweeping changes to the Uniform Code of Military Justice to combat sexual assault in the military by removing immediate Commanders from the decision-making chain regarding the prosecution of crimes like rape and sexual assault. As the Chair of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, our subcommittee has worked to ensure the Department has had the proper resources to combat sexual assault and violence in the military and to support victims. However, the pervasive nature of this societal problem has plagued our military for too long and it is time to make significant changes to the way these crimes are adjudicated. S. 1605 takes this first step, and I am proud of the bipartisan and bicameral work that has been done to begin to address this.

S. 1605 supports our men and women in uniform and their families by authorizing a well-deserved 2.7 percent pay increase. It also contains several important provisions to promote inclusion and diversity within our Armed Forces including authorizing additional support for Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The composition of America's Armed Forces and its leadership must reflect the increasing diversity of our society and this legislation promotes diversity and inclusion within the Services.

As our planet continues to face the devastating impacts of climate change, it is critical that the Department of Defense act. Combating climate change isn't about engaging in social politics, it is a matter of national security. The Department has too many installations that are susceptible to extreme weather events, which leads to too many days when our troops cannot train. And, as the largest procurer of energy in the federal government, the Department must become more energy efficient. S. 1605 makes key investments and authorizes specific actions to address the threat climate change poses to our national security and bolster energy resiliency across the Department of Defense. Additionally, S. 1605 addresses the long-term impacts of PFAS/PFOA contamination in our communities surrounding military installations. The legislation creates a Department Task Force on PFAS to spearhead DoD's response, as well as authorizes \$517 million above the President's Budget Request for PFAS remediation projects.

Additionally, this legislation includes Department of State Authorizations that bolsters our essential diplomatic authorities to emphasize the whole of government approach to our na-

tional security. This is critically important in the wake of the serious damage caused to the Department of State and our international diplomatic efforts by the Trump administration. I commend the Biden administration's efforts to refocus on diplomacy, on reengaging in our alliances, and on rebuilding the State Department.

While I am supporting this legislation and many of the good provisions contained in it, this bill does have areas that I think could have been greatly improved. First, this legislation does not support the Biden administration's efforts to finally close the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The detention facility has been a stain on our global reputation and a detriment to our national security for two decades. I included language in the Fiscal Year 2022 Defense Appropriations Act that would allow for the closure of the facility, so I am deeply disappointed to see existing language on Guantanamo Bay maintained in S. 1605.

Second, I am disappointed that the Congress continues to avoid our responsibility to sunset existing Authorizations of Use of Military Force (AUMF). The 2001 and 2002 AUMF's are out of date and have been stretched and reinterpreted by four separate administrations. It is long past time for Congress to have a comprehensive discussion on our Constitutional responsibility to authorize force. That includes having a frank discussion on how drones are utilized by the military and the Intelligence Community. If a new AUMF is necessary, then Congress needs to have the courage to have that debate in public and come to a decision.

Last, while S. 1605 contains critically important policy provisions that support our future national security needs, I believe that Congress must be a good steward of taxpayer dollars. That is why I continue to be supportive of the topline funding number in President Biden's FY22 budget request for the Department of Defense and the number contained in the Fiscal Year 2022 Defense Appropriations Act produced by the House of Representatives. While drafting the defense appropriations act this past summer, the committee had serious conversations and made tough, but necessary, decisions regarding our national security budget. The defense appropriations bill that the House produced reflects a balanced approach in appropriately funding our national security while allowing for necessary increases in domestic priorities in support of the American people here at home. We also need to have an honest discussion about having a new round of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) in line with the Department of Defense's recommendations. A new BRAC round could save taxpayers billions of dollars that could be better spent elsewhere.

While the authorizers have shared their ideas on how to fund the military in this legislation, it is the Appropriations Committee that will ultimately decide how to fund our Armed Forces. As the FY22 appropriations process moves forward, I will continue to work with my colleagues to ensure that the Department of Defense is funded responsibly and that the interests of American people are protected.

Madam Speaker, I urge a yes vote on this legislation.

EXPRESSING GRATITUDE TO ANN LIMJOCO FOR TWENTY YEARS OF SERVICE

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 8, 2021

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to Ann Limjoco, a dedicated public servant who spent twenty years on my staff assisting constituents of the 9th Congressional District of Illinois. Ann will be starting a new chapter in the new year, and I wish her success and happiness moving forward.

Ann served many years as the Suburban Director on my district staff. Overseeing my suburban operations, Ann worked closely with municipalities from Evanston to Arlington Heights and everywhere in between. She built strong relationships with elected officials at all levels of government and was a well-known face at events throughout the district. When municipalities needed federal assistance or input, they knew that Ann was a reliable ally and an open door.

Ann regularly worked with other members of my staff to organize outreach events throughout the 9th District. She played an instrumental role in carrying out dozens of hiring events, community resource fairs, municipal information events, and many others. Ann often spoke on my behalf, representing me with professionalism and competence.

Ann was my liaison to the O'Hare Noise Compatibility Commission (ONCC), an organization that spent many years working to address and alleviate the negative impacts of O'Hare Airport on surrounding suburbs. She was a true expert in this field and I relied on her for up-to-date information on an issue that many of my constituents deal with day in and day out.

In addition to outreach and relationship building efforts, Ann was a vigorous advocate for constituents needing assistance with problems related to taxes, immigration, the postal service, and a host of other issues. All told, she handled over three thousand constituent cases, and I have no doubt that her hard work changed many lives for the better. Ann also helped run an excellent intern program and helped train and mentor many young people through this program.

My staff and I will undoubtedly feel the loss of Ann's deep knowledge and many years of experience. I have no doubt that Ann will succeed at whatever she sets her mind to.

CELEBRATING THE 200TH
BIRTHDAY OF CLARA BARTON

HON. ANDY KIM

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 8, 2021

Mr. KIM of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the upcoming 200th birthday of Clara Barton and the efforts of the Bordentown Historical Society to have the City of Bordentown, New Jersey officially proclaim December 4, Clara Barton Day.

Clara Barton was a trailblazer throughout her life, with a commitment and passion for